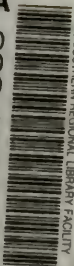




INSPIRATIONS BY

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JOHN O. COIT.





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INSPIRATIONS

BY

JOHN O. COIT.

SAN FRANCISCO:
THE BANCROFT COMPANY
1894.

INTRODUCTORY POEM.

Life.

BY JAMES R. LOWELL.

Life is a sheet of paper white
Whereon each one of us may write
His word or two—and then comes night !

“Lo, time and space enough,” we cry,
“To write an epic,” so we try
Our nibs upon the edge—and die.

Muse not which way the pen to hold ;
Luck hates the slow and loves the bold ;
Soon comes the darkness and the cold.

Greatly begin ! Though thou hast time
But for a line be that sublime ;
Not failure, but low aim, is crime.

INSPIRATIONS.

As He Sees Best.

“AS He sees best,” I ask no more.
Why should I pray so selfishly?
Wilt not Thou, Lord, whom I adore,
Make all things best for all, in Thee?

Written in the Fall of 1888.

My Romance.

◊ SOME day I'll complete my romance !
If *God wills*; it may be so.
If I *may* not, need it matter?
“Nothing useless is, or low.”

Written July 15th, 1890.

The Plainest Answer.

◊ I am weary ! I am weary !
With this constant questioning,
With these doubtings, these reflections !
Knowing not what time will bring.
I would have no doubtful answer
To these questions which I ask,

Telling me that in future
 May be shown me some *great* task.

I would know what I should do *now*,
 Would be *sure* which way to go;
Would not leave undone the labors
 Which are *mine*, while here below !

In this world, the plainest answer
 Seems to be, "Go, labor on
As you choose !" But in the spirit
 "Even so, Thy Will be done."

So, to still my heart's emotions,
 And to keep myself content,
I make answer to my spirit,
 "Labor on, spend and be spent !"

Choose your work ! Put thou into it
 All the good there is in you !
And remember, o'er all, through all
 Worketh God, the ever-true !

We are but God's agents, *truly*
 We should live, as He desires,
Not in coldness, not unduly,
 But as "touched" by heavenly fires.

"Duty" is a cold word: surely
 He who suffers, he who sings

“To win men” may labor purely
Out of love for men, and “things !”

Let us always labor gladly,
Ne’er despairing, ever strong,
Till our “sighs are lost in singing,”
Till we join the holy throng.

“Face to face” with God, the Father,
Fully pardoned, fully blest,
Taken Home with Him, forever,
There enjoying *perfect* rest.

Written October 16th, 1890.

Faith.

FAITH makes real the heavenly mead-
ows,

Cheers us 'mid these earthly shadows
Telling us of that blest country

Where men neither sin nor die.

Where, beyond the sight of mortals
Stand those heavenly, pearly portals,
Which we *see* not, but believing

We shall enter, bye-and-bye.

When the silence seems unbroken,
When to us no word is spoken,

When our souls most miss that music
Which delighted us, erewhile ;
We should watch, and wait, and listen,
Soon the darkening night will glisten
With the shining of His Presence,
Where the angel-faces smile.

Soon for us this world's employments,
Joys and sorrows, disappointments,—
All will cease. Beyond *its* knowledge
We shall be, forevermore.
Then, forgiven, blessed, loving
We would live forever, moving
Only as He wills, rejoicing
In His service, evermore !

Even here, forgiven, loving,
We may gladly live, removing
From our souls the ache of sorrow
By our faith in truth Divine.
Though the chords be rudely broken,
Though we leave those words unspoken
Which to us seem right and needed,—
Father, fit our wills to Thine !

We believe *Thy* times and seasons
Do not come for *narrow* reasons,

But are "set," as *Thou* appointest,
 Therefore can be *only* good.
Through our spirits, by Thy teaching,
 Blessings wondrous, great, far-reaching,
 Come to us, if we but follow
 Through the darkness. This we would !

Written October 26th, 1890.

God Lives.

THOUGH thy dearest friend forsake
 thee.

Though the one you trusted fall ;
Still believe, in heaven, above us,
 God *lives* (and He reigns o'er all).

Written November 30th, 1890.

Through the Darkness.

LET us follow *through* the darkness,
 Though our way seem sad and lone ;
 For we know that our great Father
 Ever makes our cares His own.

Not in vain does he afflict us,
 Not for naught does He cause pain ;
 But through sorrow, sin and pleasure
 Tells us we shall live again.

Though our plans are often thwarted,
Though both brain and body fail,
Though *the best* which we can muster
Often seems of no avail.

Though instead of climbing upward
We continually fall,
Let us follow through the darkness
Till we hear that welcome call ;—

Telling us that though unworthy,
(Oft in folly, oft in sin),
God forgives us, loves us, takes us
Where no evil enters in.

Not because our lives are perfect,
Not because our acts are great,
But because through all temptations
We have tried to love, not hate.

Tried to fit our earthly service
To the truth, have tried to rise
O'er "the world, the flesh, the devil"
Toward the "mansions" in the skies.

Oft they seem so far above us,
Oft the truth so doubtful seems
We are tempted to consider
Even God a thing of dreams.

Yet our faith o'errules these doubtings,
Yet we follow, trusting God;
Yet we sin and yet we suffer,
'Neath a necessary "rod."

Through that "rod " God rules the future.
We would follow, we would trust
Through the shadows, through the sun-
shine,
Till our bodies turn to dust.

Then our spirits, free from suffering,
Freed from sinning, free from pain,
Will be taken Home forever,
Nevermore to sin again.

"Nevermore to sin again." Nevermore to be untrue to that within our control which is *best*! Nevermore to be in mal-adjustment with that which becomes ours! Nevermore to be discontented with that which *we* are allowed! *Satisfied* hereafter. No more loneliness, nor vanity, nor vexation of spirit. Perfect, there! Continually developing, here, that within our control which is better. ⁽¹⁾ "Casting out" the worse, that which is beneath our privilege.

(1) that which is truer and yet more true, and trusting God to *complete*.

Beyond.

IS the present full of sorrow ?
Look beyond !
Do you dread the coming morrow ?
Look beyond !
We believe *our* God doth guard us,
In *His* ways He will reward us,
Nothing can from Him retard us,
Further on.

Retard, i. e., to continue to hinder. *After* death there will be no hindrances to our communion with God—no evil thoughts, “no veil of flesh,” no sin. There and then we shall be “where no evil enters in.” What if we do not go, literally, to “a city” or “a country?” We are assured of a life beyond, and “more life” is what we desire, both here and beyond. The place is comparatively unimportant. This world itself is surely fair enough—pleasant enough, if only humanity were better adjusted. It is “the life” which is *the* important thing with each one of us.

“The life,” yes, “the Spirit life,” “the intellectual life,” the man-life, and the God-life (*superior* to the brute life, the mere animal life which may lead), *using* “the animal,” “the natural,” “the human,” as means to ends—*higher* ends than those of present appearances, but not being either blinded, absorbed or debased by these lesser, lower, grosser influences.

Self.

DO not shrink from present suffering !
 Let not self thine idol be.

Further on will come *thy* resting
 At the end the King thou'lt see.

Now's the time for earnest labor,
 Now's the time to conquer pain !
 Working through self for thy neighbor,
 Win and lose for others' gain.

Never let *thyself* be foremost
 In thine head or in thine heart ;
 Rather call yourself an actor
 Destined only for *its* part.

"Overcome " and " win " as may be,
 Keeping self in its own place ;
 Not *too* high, and not too humble,
 Following till you see His Face !

Sinful man may not *now* see it,
 But if he *in truth* believe,
Later will there come that blessing
 Which the pure in heart receive.

That " vision " given to those who " shall see God," to
 those who " *then* shall see *Thee*, and be *satisfied*."

Written October 18th, 1891.

Toward the End.

THE end is coming. I am going,
Going, going, past "the bar,"
Soon I'll be where there is *knowing*,
Where the "many mansions are."

Here we watch, and wait and wonder,
Here we question, oft alone ;
But beyond in that blest "yonder,"
"We shall know as we are known."

God grant that whater'e befall us
Patiently *our* "threads" we weave ;
Through the life which most does "call"
us,
As we can and do believe.

Not only patiently, but also cheerfully, hopefully and with zest. If we would lead others to believe in that which we believe to be better than life, our persuasion, should be more than half-hearted !

"Enthusiasm is the genius of sincerity, and truth accomplishes no *victory* without it."—*Bulwer*.

Written December, 1891.

Alvin Telfank.

(Lost from a Ferry-boat through Criminal Negligence.)

☞ WAS early in March in '92

Crossing the San Francisco Bay,
The air was clear, the sun was bright;
Smooth as a mill-pond the water lay.

All seemed happy, all seemed good,
Nothing to indicate "all's *not* well,"
Save the *tight* lashings upon the boats,
That Sunday noon, on the San Rafael.

But listen ! A splash and then a scream.

"Man overboard," the people cry.

We on the upper deck rush to the side.

"Will he come up again ?" "Must he
die ?"

We see a head. It moves ; he swims

Bravely and gallantly, steadily, well.

But, oh ! The lashings upon those boats,
That Sunday noon, on the San Rafael.

Newly painted, spick and span,

Neat and attractive, but fatal to life

Those lashings hold the boats in their
place

So tight that vain is the hurried strife,

For ere they are loosened we see no more
That head above the gentle swell.
Those fatal lashings have cost a life,
That Sunday noon, on the San Rafael.
Written in Sept., '92, on a train, nearing Sacramento.

Encouragement.

☞ I feel myself uplifted, I see before me
rise
Mountains with lofty summits, towering
to the skies.
I see below a valley of beauteous slope
and green,
But just where it is fairest, a fissure wide
is seen,
Left by some mighty earthquake, a chasm
deep and vast
Such as the sons of Korah beheld in ages
past.
Why should I think thus clearly, why
should this sight be seen
By my imagination; what can this vision
mean?
Is it a truthful prophecy, is thus to yawn
at last

Before me in life's valley some chasm
 deep and vast,
Some widely stretching chasm, a grave to
 all my hopes,
At which I stop half-blinded, as one in
 darkness gropes,
No light *beyond* that chasm, no hope
 beyond this earth
Where hopes so often vanish and leave
 of joy such dearth?
We hope not. Oh ! we pray not.
We live, we struggle on,
Determined that in conflict the *best* shall
 soon be won.
Perhaps not soon in minutes, perhaps
 not soon in years,
But "in the time appointed," perhaps
 through many fears,
Yet toward that we will follow, ev'n to
 the setting sun,
Until the night has fallen, until the
 crown is won.
What though *our* light seem fading,
What though the shadows fall?
God reigns, His love is o'er us
And in, and through life's *all*.

So be thou strong, my brother, and give
no place to fears;
Instead, make use of courage, and
strength which lives for years.
That strength of life and purpose which
meets and conquers pain,
Which though it often suffers still hopes
and lives again.
Which rises from the valley, which
clammers up the steep,
Which ever *toward* the summit its way
doth constant keep.
Which never stops to linger amid the
dust of earth
To look for "ends," but through these
"means" insists on freedom's birth,
And seeks the truth in romance, and
seeks the truth in life.
Which uses creeds as watchwords, not as
"a bond" in strife.
Which seeks true inspiration, the gift of
inspired thought,
To benefit its fellow-men, but never to be
bought.
Which does not dull by usage,
But all along its way

Still gathers truth and beauty, and
strength for *every* day.

Strength to be used continually, not to
be spent in vain,

But used to benefit someone, somehow,
Wherever there is pain,

Wherever there is sorrow, wherever there
is woe.

Go forth, strong one, lift up the weak,
Ev'n if he seem a foe !

Become a Good Samaritan, pity thy
brother's needs.

Sacrifice self, love everyone, be little
bound by creeds.

Devote thy life to something *beyond* the
present hour,

Great purposes, great benefits, dark
though the storm-clouds lower.

Beyond that storm lies heaven, perhaps
not far away,

Beyond the darkness *lives* the sun of an
eternal day.

Thy foot-path may seem narrow, weary
may be thy feet,

Yet surely unto others it will appear
more meet

If thou treads't *thy* path bravely, if thou
the summit gain,
If thou refuse to linger, to grieve o'er
thine own pain.
Instead look upward, homeward,
Instead live toward the Light,
It's coming ! Yes ! It's coming !
The East is growing bright with promise
of great freedom,
Great truths almost in view !
What part wilt thou take, brother, in
this, the gospel new
Of freedom to all nations, of freedom not
in vain,
Freedom from superstition and ignorance
and pain?
This is the age of knowledge, this is the
age of health.
The age of many millions of consecrated
wealth
Devoted to man's benefit in hospitals and
schools,
To open wide the doorways, outside all
narrow rules,
To treat man as a brother, to soothe away
his pain

Of body, and that sadder sight, the sight
of mental strain
And agonizing worry—that anxiousness
of strife
Which often deeply injures the very
founts of life,
Which fairly wears the heart out of
many a mother—a strain
Which often tires the body, and more
than tires the brain
Of many a loving husband who fears that
wife or child
Will suffer if he falter or faint amid this
wild race after money, money——
Thank God that in life's sum
This money makes not half the whole !
Thank God the day will come
Before long when this conflict will not be
half so hard,
Then gates of earthly happiness will be
less closely barred.
Then " things " will be " adjusted,"
Let's hasten on that day,
And toward it, to it, for it,
Both work and give and pray !

Written January 13th, 1893.

At the Edge of the Valley.

JUST at the edge of the valley
Where the light is growing dim,
I see a figure standing,
Above those shadows grim.

A woman's graceful figure,
I see her turn her head,
And as I listen closely
It seems as though she said :

"I'm coming. Yes! I'm coming,
Led by affection true,
To you who long have waited
For *me* to come to you.

"Forbidden by your business
From coming unto me,
Yet still you wait and listen
And forward look to see

"If ever *your* 'heart's darling'
In life will find a place ;
If ever to her city
Your feet their way will trace.

"Now look and wait no longer,
For I am here, at last,

Now watching, waiting, longing
And sadness, all have past.

“ I’ll comfort you in sorrow,
Walk with you in all woe.
And ever upward, onward
Together we will go.

“ No more shall we be lonely
Though life few friends may yield.
Together we will wander
Through wood, and lane and field.

“ To each we will be helpful,
For each we will be strong,
And make of life a melody,
A crowning wreath of song.

“ Because we shall be happy,
Because we shall be glad,
Our lives will be all sunshine,
No more can we be sad

“ When hand in hand together,
We clamber up life’s steep.
What though the path be rugged ?
What though some streams be deep ?

“ Shall we not be *together*,
Together in the sense

Of sympathizing closely,
Whether in strife intense,

“Or resting by a brookside ;
Whether upon a hill

We struggle slowly upward,
Or dream beside a rill ?

“Whatever our experience
We’ll suit each other’s needs
As best we can, and sympathize
With all one’s thoughts and deeds

“Whether our efforts seem in vain
Or if they richly yield
A harvest of great honor,
Whether the battle-field

“On which we ‘win’ be one of fame
Or whether it be one
On which no honors can be seen
Ev’n till the setting sun.

“Yet we shall be together
Ev’n till that close of day,
And when it comes we’ll only ask
For strength to *truly* pray

“‘Thy will be done,’ Our Father,
For Thou dost know the *end*.

Thou art *in* all. We cannot see
Why Thou this fate did send.

“But we believe *Thou* sent it,
And Thou art *only* good ;
Therefore, although we cannot
Have that we so much *would*—

“Yet we can still be patient
Until our own life's end,
Can benefit someone, somehow,
Can still our strength expend.

“For others, though that strength soon
fail,
Soon leaves us without power,
And lay us low on beds of pain
For many a weary hour.

“Yet we can still be hopeful,
And ever grow *more fond*
Of truth, and look for it .
Ev'n in the Great Beyond.”

Written January 23d, 1893, at office, during part of a
hot afternoon, and finished at midnight, three days
later.

Waiting.

EAGERLY scanning the future,
Looking for some "work" to do ;
Something which truly is worthy,
Something he never will rue.

Not for his own satisfaction,
Not for *his* pleasure or gain,
But for the good of the public
And for *their* freedom from pain.

These are the thoughts of his spirit,
These the desires of his life ;
Tempting him often to "efforts,"
Tempting him often to strife.

Yet to this day all his searching
Toward this *effecting* of good,
Toward this *sufficient* attainment,
Toward that he so much would !

Often has seemed but "a vision,"
Often has seemed "all in vain,"
Often has brought but disaster,
Often has increased "the pain."

Yet he moves steadily "onward,"
Whether this vision seem bright,

Or if it seem a dark shadow,
Promising nothing but "night."
For he believes in "the morning!"
"Yonder," "beyond," "o'er the grave,"
Lasting, eternal, "triumphant,"
At "the last break of the wave."

Written October 23, 1893, *et seq.*

Day by Day.

"DAY by day," the message readeth,
Day by day the pathway gleams;
Yet too soon the "vision" speedeth,
Till our "calling" *only* "seems."

Not by broad or gilded stairways
Is "the mount of vision" won;
But by steep and narrow footpaths
Till our journey's *almost* done.

Then we look for some expansion,
Some enlargement of our view—
True enjoyment of life's pleasures—
Something *grander yet* to do.

Even though we're often thwarted
In our efforts *toward* the good;

Even though through many "seasons"

We gain *little* which we *would*.

Onward still ! Let not earth's pleasures

Gain too large a hold on thee,

For beyond, *above* all "treasures"

Is *thy soul's good*, endlessly.

In this life we often suffer,

Often seem to work in vain,

But we're told, "the greater anguish

Makes, indeed, the sweeter strain."

Is this true ? It is, most surely !

'Tis a necessary "way."

Only thus the truth, most purely,

Can be found amid our "day."

Otherwise, we oft would care not,

Oft would be content to live

Like the cattle, only looking

For such joys as earth can give.

But, instead, our loving Father

Fills us with divine desires,

Teaches us that *o'er* life's valley

Ever burn the heavenly fires.

Through "life's pleasures," upward, Home-
ward,

We would "follow," *toward* The Light,
"Apprehending," "gaining," "losing,"
Till our faith shall end in sight.

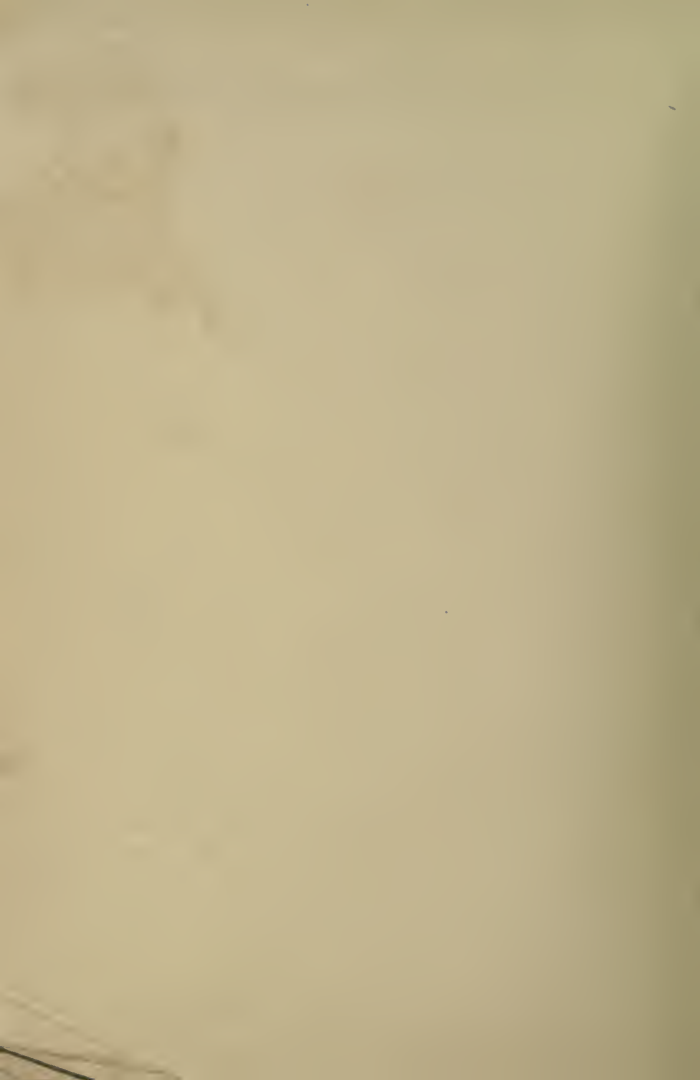
Then, *beyond* earth's passing portals
We would live in Heaven's pure Home,
Free from sin, and freed from suffering,
Nevermore abroad to roam.

But, instead, in that blest hallway
Where the pure in heart abide,
We would live in freedom, alway,—
Free from "time" and free from
"tide."

Written April 5th, 1894, during a few minutes while
waiting for dinner.









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